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AMERICA TO BE THE WORLD'S ART CENTER

Paris is the best—one might say the only—place to study art at present, but a time may come when America will itself be an "art center" to which Europeans will flock for study and "atmosphere." It does not take so long as one might imagine to create an art center.

Twenty years ago Rome held the place Paris does to-day. When I went to Europe to study, seventeen years ago, favor was about equally divided between Rome, Munich, and Paris, and it was the influence of my master, St. Gaudens, that decided me to go to Paris, for which, as for many other things, I am deeply grateful.

When the time is ripe for it, undoubtedly a national school of art will be established, and then it will not take long to make this the world's art center, for there is larger opportunity here than in any of the old countries. France already has her old châteaux, with their old carvings, paintings, sculptures, and tapestries, and can give little encouragement to the men of to-day. America has hers to get, and with her growing love of the fine arts will eventually attract all the best workers.

I do not believe in forcing these things. They must be a matter of growth, and when the national life is ready for it, the national art will come—and it will stay. There is no hurry. Americans are doing very well as they are. They lead the world in mechanics and engineering, and these departments of creative energy are as much "art" as painting, sculpture, and architecture. That idea of art as a trinity embracing these three is very crude, it seems to me—very young and innocent!

The magnificent work of Americans in mechanical inventions may be regarded as a prophecy of what they will do in art when a great national school is once founded. It should be on the lines of the *École des Beaux Arts*, in Paris, which gives both theoretical and practical instruction, and is open to all Frenchmen from fifteen to thirty years old. Given such a school, with the superb openings offered to artists more and more by the riches of our citizens, the growth would be phenomenal. Then art students would need to go abroad only for a year or two, merely to profit by travel, and to acquire the breadth of view that only acquaintance with foreign countries and ideas can give.

Just now, however, I fear that it must be admitted that no place in the world equals Paris for those who would become artists, and American men and women will not be content to study art here in America knowing that there are opportunities so much broader there.

FREDERICK MACMONNIES.